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Newsletter



OFFICE FOR FOOD AND FEED CONSERVATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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WASHINGTON ROUNDUP

The need for easing consumer demand for meat and thereby relieving some of the pressure on prices is indicated in a report of the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Agricultural Economics. This report reviews the decline in the number of livestock in 1947 and predicts a further drop this year.

During 1947 hogs decreased 2 million (3 percent). A 5 percent decline brought the number of stock sheep on January 1, 1948 to a point 38 percent under 1942 (the biggest 6-year drop ever recorded) and to the smallest number since 1871. Beef cattle and calves declined 1.5 million in 1947, and dairy animals 1.1 million - - - a total decrease of 2.6 million head.

"The downward trend in meat output," the report states, "is likely to continue through 1948 and most of 1949." The possibility of a reversal of the trend is based on two "ifs" - - (1) that the 1948 corn crop is large and (2) that the 1949 spring pig crop increases over 1948.

In regard to the second point, it is a distressing fact that for every six pigs going to market, four others have died before getting to marketing age. Right now, the Office for Food and Feed Conservation is in the midst of a program to "Save Grain By Cutting Pig Losses." A pamphlet of the same title, giving information on how to do this, can be obtained by writing to this office.

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The clear, cold reason why hunger stalks the world today is contained in the latest report of the Department of Agriculture's Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations.

Despite the fact that the United States harvested an all-time record wheat crop last year, world production of breadgrains - - wheat and rye - - was below the 1935 - 39 average. The 1947 wheat crop was 3 percent less than the 1935-39 average and the rye crop 14 percent less. And this reduction in world food supplies must be considered in the light of increased world population.

The need for exporting food to Europe is highlighted by a review of the 1947 breadgrain production in that part of the world. Wheat production in Europe was about 35 percent below the 1935-39 average and 23 percent less than the small crop in 1946. Rye production was also 35 percent below the 1935-39 average, though only moderately smaller than in 1946.

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There are good prospects for a plentiful supply of fresh vegetables to stretch our dwindling meat supplies.

According to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the total production of commercial truck crops for winter harvest is now estimated at 1,412,000 tons - - 8 percent greater than last winter and 22 percent above the 10 year average. Larger winter crops than a year ago are indicated for snap beans, beets, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, escarole, lettuce, shallots, and spinach.

Meanwhile, indications are that farmers will plant slightly more acreage for springtruck crops than they did a year ago.

All of which points to the desirability of stretching meat dishes with economical, plentiful vegetables. This office, of course, is continuing the distribution of "Peace Plate" menus as a guide to consumers in planning low-cost, nutritious meals.

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Conservation practices are becoming more important as the demands for food, both in this country and abroad, continue heavy.

These demands make it necessary to maintain farm output of most crops at high wartime levels. But the land can not be pushed too hard and farmers, according to State reports reaching the Department of Agriculture here, are indicating their desire to start returning to better rotation and more extensive soil-conservation practices.

Thus, the need for food and feed conservation becomes greater with the ever increasing burden imposed on the land. Our 1948 goals, for example, call for increases over 1947 planted acreages for corn, oats, barley, sorghums, rye, flaxseed and dry edible beans. Goals for wheat, rice and soybeans are being continued at the maximum acreages feasible in terms of good land use.

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A new farm fact sheet, "Save Grain By Controlling Livestock Pests," has been prepared by the Office for Food and Feed Conservation for county agricultural agents and other farm specialists to aid farmers and ranchers in county-wide programs. The fact sheet brings up-to-the-minute recommendations on materials, formulas and methods for controlling external pests.

It declares that "the brunt of an estimated annual half billion dollar loss caused by external livestock pests falls on farmers and ranchers in wasted feed, reduced meat and milk production, and damaged hides."

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The Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the National Fire Protection Association now is engaged in the annual Spring Clean-up Campaign. An important part of the project is to persuade Americans to clean up debris and trash which are fire hazards and ideal hiding places for rats.

Farm families alone lose about 3,500 lives and 100 million dollars worth of farm property annually by fires. This means about 10 farm people die every day because of farm fires. Four farm buildings are destroyed by fire every hour. About 90 percent of our farm fires are caused by carelessness, and carelessness involves debris and trash.

The grain rats alone destroyed or damaged last year is estimated at 200 million bushels. If this amount of grain were all wheat, it would be sufficient to supply one pound of bread every day for a year to 36 million people. That would go a long way toward alleviating the racking hunger pains of men, women and children in Western Europe.

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Note to Freedom Gardeners:

The Department of Agriculture urges you to read carefully the labels on seed packages. A survey made by the Department in 134 stores in the District of Columbia at the beginning of the garden season a year ago indicated that many dealers were selling seed not properly labeled.

The Federal Seed Act of 1939 requires that all seed shipped in interstate commerce must be fully and accurately labeled to indicate the quality of the seed. It must have been tested for germination within six months prior to date of sale, and vegetable seeds which are below standard in germination may be sold only when so labeled.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Excerpt from the Journal of the American Medical Association:

"The present shortage of wheat concerns physicians throughout the world because it stands as a stark barrier to the relief of world hunger and as an obstacle to world economic recovery. Never before has relief from hunger of so many millions of persons been so contingent on available supplies of a single food item."

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From an Associated Press story in the Washington Post, date lined Vienna, March 11:

"Observers predicted tonight Communists in Austria, a neighbor of Czechoslovakia, soon will begin an all-out drive against the coalition government of Chancellor Leopold Figli...

"The first step in the Communist campaign, it was suggested, would be to blame the critical food situation on Socialist Food Minister Otto Sagmeister."

A LONE WOMAN'S CONTRIBUTION

It's not by accident that this item follows the preceding editorial comments. We think it's a logical sequence. Here is the story of one American woman:

The stories of hunger abroad and her own efforts to feed her family at costs within her budget prompted Mrs. C. I. Hendrickson, a mother and a homemaker who was formerly dean of home economics at Connecticut State College, to invite some of her neighbors in to discuss what individual homemakers could do. She wanted to establish the relation of shopping practices to both the domestic and international food situation.

The sessions proved so helpful that Mrs. Hendrickson was soon busy conducting similar meetings in and around Bethesda, Md. She feels there is an opportunity for all home economists with a knowledge of nutrition to be of great service to their communities by making themselves available to lead such group discussions.

RECIPE CONTEST

Mary Meade, Chicago Tribune Home Economics Editor, is conducting a recipe contest featuring simple meat and money saving suggestions. The newspaper is awarding a \$5 daily prize to readers submitting the best recipes.

INDUSTRY COOPERATION

The American Corn Millers' Federation incorporated a message to seed dealers in a recent issue of the industry's newsletter, "Corn Talks." The publication reads in part:

"From one end of the country to the other, the National Grain Conservation program is fast gaining momentum day by day

"YOU, the Seed Dealer, are an important segment of the nation-wide drive to conserve grains because you know intimately the farmers in your area and can work most effectively in gaining their cooperation. Such participation on your part can be of untold value in making the program a huge success and your efforts cannot help but work to your personal benefit."

We will keep you informed on events in Washington and the programs of local committees and organizations. We welcome your suggestions and invite you to send us news of your activities in the voluntary food conservation program.

